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The  
PARKER AND KEARNY  
FAMILIES  
Of New Jersey

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CAPTAIN JAMES PARKER

PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE  
NEW BRUNSWICK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FEBRUARY 18, 1897

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PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

1925

This is No. *119*.....

One Hundred and Sixty-Nine Copies of The Parker and Kearny  
Families of New Jersey were Printed to be Sold.



1773109

Probably no two families in New Jersey better deserve the preservation of their records than the Kearnys and the Parkers and in his day the author of the following interesting paper had no superior in ability to tell of their history and in justifiable pride in their achievements.

H. E. PICKERSGILL.

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## THE PARKER AND KEARNY FAMILIES OF NEW JERSEY

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Nothing is truer than the oft quoted sentiment that "Men, high-minded men, do constitute the State"; and, tested by this standard, the influence of these two families, in making New Jersey what she is, cannot be overestimated, or stated. The men, and, to a large degree the women, too, have been thoroughly imbued with the spirit that glows in that magnificent address of the elder Bishop Doane, made fifty-one years ago, before the New Jersey Historical Society.

Said he:—"I never shall forget with what a strange and startled joy I stopped, and stood, and gazed upon a few black letters on a plain deal board, at the corner of a street in the old English town of Lincoln. I had been musing beneath the Roman Archway, called the "Newport Gate," of the ever changing stream of life, that has not ceased to roll through it for twice ten centuries; and, busied with my thoughts, had wandered off, alone. When, as I climbed the steep ascent, on which the town is built, lifting my eyes from the ground, near the "Danes Gate," they were arrested by the words, "New Jersey."

"In an instant, Romans, Danes, English, all were gone, and I stood a Jerseyman, and in New Jersey."

These men, of whom I am to speak to you, were all,

in the largest sense of the word, "Americans"; but they found that they could best fill the measure of that character, by being, with all their hearts true Jersey-men; and of them may almost be said what Louis XIV said of himself, they were "The State."

If, in speaking of the Parker family, I confine myself almost exclusively to that branch of it of which I am a member, I trust that I shall not be deemed egotistical. Other Parkers there were, and from the fact that they appeared in different parts of the Colony about the same time, it is fairly inferable that they were relatives. Many of the others were of local celebrity; but none of them seems to have attained much more, except the late Governor Joel Parker, with whose career as citizen, patriot, Governor and Justice of the Supreme Court, all of us are familiar.

He was called to the helm of the State, at a time when the great civil war was raging; and minds were aflame, and hearts were filled with angry passion; but he was equal to every occasion; and, though politically out of accord—the only Governor but one who was not in accord with the party that ruled the hour, he administered his high office with a single eye to the right; with complete fidelity both to the State and the United States governments; and to the entire satisfaction and commendation of President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton. Governor Parker knew that the best way to be a true American was to be a true Jerseyman.

The Parkers of whom I speak have long been residents of the County of Middlesex.

The earliest knowledge that we have of the Parkers in Middlesex, is that, as far back as 1675, Elisha Parker



(1) was a resident of the Town of Woodbridge in that County. That place was settled by a colony from Newbury—as it was then called—Massachusetts; and named after Rev. John Woodbridge, their former minister. Exactly whence this first Elisha came, is not certainly known. There was one of that name mentioned in the Annals of Barnstable, Massachusetts, as far back as 1657, in which year (July 15) he married Elizabeth Hinckley, a daughter of Samuel Hinckley, who had come to Scituate, Cape Cod, from Tenterden, County Kent, in the Ship “Hercules” of Sandwich, from England, in the year 1634. Elizabeth Hinckley, was baptized at Scituate, September 6, 1635. Samuel moved from Scituate to Barnstable in 1639-40. His eldest son, Thomas Hinckley was very prominent in the affairs of the Plymouth Colony, and was Governor from 1681 to '92. Hinckleys are mentioned as prominent in Staffordshire, where one of them was High Sheriff as far back as 1327-30 (Edward III.)

Elisha Parker of Barnstable had a wife Elizabeth, which was the name of the wife of Elisha of Woodbridge. His children, born at Barnstable, were (1) Thomas, born May 1658, (2) Elisha, born 1660; these were also the names of the children of Elisha of Woodbridge. An affidavit made by one Elisha, at Woodbridge on May 1, 1707, gives his age at that time as 46 years, which makes him probably the one above referred to who was born in 1660-1.

Mr. Whitehead credits the first Elisha of Woodbridge with having had three wives:—1, Elizabeth, 2, Hannah Rolf, 3, Ursula Craige, and gives the name of his first daughter by Hannah Rolf, as Elizabeth. Han-

nah would hardly have been willing to name her first child after her own immediate predecessor in her husband's affections; but if his mother was Elizabeth, he would not improbably have desired, and Hannah would have probably been willing, to name it after her.

Mr. Whitehead shows that the first Elisha he mentions was old enough to be a grand-father in May, 1676, which, if he was the son of the Elisha of Barnstable would confer that honor upon him at the age of 16. (Not even the Parkers are so precocious as that.) He also mentions two deeds—one from Elisha to his son Elisha, dated 1680, and another from Elisha to his son John, dated in 1707. The signature to the first deed was evidently that of a man then very old; the signature of the second deed was that of a very much younger man. The will of the second Elisha, the signature to which is the same as that of the second deed, is on file in the Office of the Secretary of State at Trenton. In that will he provides for his children and for his wife Ursula. The second Elisha mentioned by Mr. Whitehead married Catharine Alexander and died childless.

From all these facts, it is reasonably certain that the Elisha of Barnstable, and the first of Woodbridge, were the same; and if so, it carries the family back in America to the early days of the Plymouth Colony. No Parker, or Hinckley, or Rolf came over in the Mayflower.

I am of the opinion that it was the first Elisha who was High Sheriff of the County of Middlesex in 1704; the Elisha who was born in 1660 would be rather young.

Elisha Parker (1) besides Thomas, and Elisha before mentioned, had a daughter Mary, and a son Samuel, which were names of the Hinckley family.

Thomas Parker (1) never made any particular name for himself; he moved to Staten Island prior to 1687, and although he had several children, nothing further is known of him or them.

Elisha Parker (2) was a man of note. He was a member of the Provincial Assembly in 1707-8-9 and 10; and seems to have been prominent in that body. August 12, 1712, in recommending him to Queen Anne for appointment as a member of the Council, he was stated to be "an inhabitant of Perth Amboy, a very large trader, and of the best estate." August 12, 1712, Queen Anne appointed him, and he took his seat, January 7, 1713. She died in 1714, and George I. reigned in her stead; and on August 19th the Council—Mr. Parker among them—took the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign. He continued to serve until January 26, 1716, his last appearance as such. He died in that year.

Samuel Parker (1,) brother of the last mentioned Elisha, had one son James, who became a very prominent man in his time. He was the first printer of New Jersey, and was born in Woodbridge in 1714. In 1724 he was apprenticed to William Bradford, the first printer in New York, who began in that year the publication of "The New York Gazette." In 1733 the apprentice ran away from his employer; nine years later returned to New York, and, the "Gazette" having been discontinued, revived it as "The Weekly Post Boy", which he continued to publish for many years. In 1751 Mr. Parker



established the first printing press in New Jersey, at Woodbridge, and printed the proceedings of the Legislature. In 1755 he established the "Connecticut Gazette," the first newspaper printed in that province. He continued his business as a printer at intervals until his death. The second volume of Nevill's Laws and Smith's History of New Jersey came from his presses. He was, in other fields, a very useful man. In connection with Benjamin Franklin, he first interested himself in the development of a Postal system for the Colonies; was, for several years, Postmaster at New York; and, at the time of his death in 1770, was Comptroller and Secretary of the Post Office for the Northern District of the British Colonies. He died in Burlington, N. J., greatly lamented, and his body was attended for five miles on its way (by) a large number of gentlemen, and met in like manner, at Perth Amboy, and escorted to his burial at Woodbridge. He was a strong Church of England man, and the then Chaplain of a British Regiment of Foot read the Burial Service of the Church over his remains. He was buried in the Presbyterian Graveyard.

He left one son, of whom nothing is now known, and a daughter Jane, who became the wife of Governor Gunning Bedford of Delaware.

The successor of Elisha Parker (2) in the Council, was his son John Parker (1), who was born November 11th, 1693. He held a commission as Colonel of the Provincial forces, but it is not known that he was ever in active service. He was appointed a member of Council by Governor Hunter, and took oath April 9, 1718, and continued in that position until death in 1732; his last appearance being August 6th. In that year George Wash-



ington was born. We make a little fun over the fondness of our southern brethren for military titles. That fondness is not modern. There were four colonels out of nine members of that Council.

During the period of his service, much of the spirit of unrest, which finally culminated in the Revolution, was exhibited. The Council and the Assembly were in frequent differences, and both with the Governor, over the questions of prerogative, and taxation; but many excellent laws were passed, under which, as amended, we live to this day. He held several local offices, at various times; was several times Mayor of Perth Amboy; a Warden and vestryman of St. Peter's Church; and lived a useful, and respected public and private life. He married September 16th, 1721, Janet, daughter of Dr. John Johnstone, whose wife was Upham Scot, daughter of George Scot, the Laird of Pitlochrie, Scotland, the author of "Scot's Model."

Dr. Johnstone and his wife had come together from Scotland to Perth Amboy, in the ill-fated Ship "Henry & Francis," arriving in December, 1685. John Parker built the stone part of the "Castle", (as it has long been called) to take his bride to in 1721; and it has ever since been the home of the family in Perth Amboy; and is now my home.

He had several children. His son John, like himself, was possessed of a military taste and spirit; and became a midshipman in the Royal Navy at the age of 16; but he soon resigned, and engaged for a while in mercantile pursuits. He took part in the campaign against the French in 1755-6, as Captain of a Company in Colonel Schuyler's Battalion of "Royal Americans." Capt. Par-

ker thought that Col. Schuyler had not properly defended Oswego; and indulged in some tart criticism of his superior officer. Later on, having been commissioned Colonel, he commanded an attack upon Fort Ticonderoga, which resulted so disastrously, that only himself, and some sixty or seventy of his men, out of about 300, escaped death or capture. He was at the frontier again in 1759; and, to the end of his life, continued to take part in whatever fighting afforded him opportunity; and he died at Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1782, being part of the expedition which in that year undertook the capture of the French West India Islands.

Another son of John Parker (1) was Elisha (3) who read law under James Alexander (formerly Attorney-General of the Province) 1721-28, whose daughter Catharine, he married. He was licensed at the August Term 1745; was an able man; but contracted consumption, and died in 1751, leaving no children. His wife was a sister of Wm. Alexander, who, though an ardent Revolutionary hero, maintained, and used to the end of his life, the title "Earl of Stirling." Gen. Washington always addressed him as "My Lord", and spoke of him as his Lordship. He had a most brilliant record as a soldier; won honors at the Battle of Long Island (where he was captured), at Trenton, Brandywine, and Monmouth. For his distinguished services he was made Major-General. It was said that, next to Washington, he had the most martial presence of any commander in the Army. He died in 1784, at Albany, N. Y.

The only one of the sons of John Parker (1) who left any children, was James Parker (1) who was born in

the Castle, in 1725, and died there October 4th, 1797. I have always thought that he was named James after his father's cousin James, the printer before noticed. The latter named his only daughter "Janet" after John Parker's wife. James Parker (1) lived a long and useful life, both as a public and private citizen. Like his father and brother John he went as a Captain of a company of Provincial militia, in August 1746, to the Northern frontier; but we have no record that he was engaged in any fighting. Afterwards he became a merchant, in West India business, principally, in partnership with Beverly Robinson of New York; but he soon became largely interested in landed property; became one of the Board of Proprietors of East Jersey, and was its Surveyor General for several years. He held several local offices, and filled them well; was Mayor of Perth Amboy (as his father had been) before and after the Revolutionary War. Governor Hardy, in July 1762, recommended his appointment as Councillor to the King; as "a man of ability and known loyalty to His Majesty"; but he was not appointed until Governor Franklin recommended it in 1764.

Mr. Parker's idea of duty is expressed in his letter to Governor Franklin, in accepting this appointment wherein he says:—"Acknowledging myself under the greatest obligation to his Majesty, and you, I know nothing can make me more acceptable to either of you, than a faithful discharge of this trust reposed in me."

That "public office is a public trust", was thus recognized by him more than a hundred and twenty years before President Cleveland expressed that sentiment with such great eclat.



Mr. Parker remained in the Council until the latter part of 1775. His associates during the period of his service were David Ogden, a prominent lawyer; the Earl of Stirling; Hon. John Stevens; Chief Justice Read; Daniel Coxe; Judge John Lawrence of Burlington; Richard Stockton and Francis Hopkinson, which two subsequently were signers of the Declaration. These were all men of mark and great ability, and Mr. Parker was the acknowledged peer of any of them.

His sense of responsibility in view of the impending struggle between King and people, was expressed in the address to the Governor by the Council in 1775, which he wrote, and in which he says, "We shall, with all sincere loyalty to our most gracious Sovereign, and all due regard to the true welfare of the inhabitants of this Province, endeavor to prevent mischiefs which our present state of affairs seems to threaten; and, by our zeal for the authority of government on the one hand, and for the constitutional rights of the people on the other, aim at restoring that health of the political body—which every good subject must most earnestly desire." These were sound words, which continue to state a safe rule of political conduct for all times, and all circumstances. We would do well to heed it more, even in these days.

Having resigned from the Council he was appointed a delegate to the Provincial Congress (of New Jersey), but he did not attend. Things moved on very fast in those days. At one of the last meetings of the Council of His Majesty which was held on November 22nd, 1775, it was "Ordered that the Clerk of the House do forthwith despatch a letter to the Hon. James Parker,

Esq., requiring his attendance," but he paid no attention to the mandate; and, two days later the Council met (John Stevens, Esq., The Chief Justice, Richard Stockton, Esq., Stephen Skinner, Esq., Daniel Coxe, Esq., John Lawrence, Esq., and Francis Hopkinson, Esq., being present) for the last time.

During the Revolutionary War, Mr. Parker preserved a strict neutrality; removed his family to his farm (Shirley) in Hunterdon County, near Kingston (now Alexandria), where they remained until the return of peace. Very soon after the war, he was elected by the Legislature of New Jersey, Mayor of Perth Amboy; and when the present Constitution of the United States had been adopted, so highly was he esteemed by all sorts and conditions of men that he was solicited to become a candidate for Congress; but he was getting along in years, and did not overcome his reluctance again to engage in political life, until it was too late to make an effective canvas. His wife was Gertrude, the only daughter of Rev. William Skinner, who was for thirty-six years, Rector of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy. That old Parish was established in the year 1685, and endures to this day. Her mother was a daughter of Hon. Stephanus Van Cortlandt of New York, who was a son of Orloff Stephenson Van Cortlandt of New York. Stephanus was born in that city in 1642; was its Mayor in 1677, and died in 1700. His wife, and the grand-mother of Mrs. Parker, was Gertrude Schuyler, a daughter of Petrus Schuyler of Albany, and his mother was a Van Achlieckenhast. Tradition in the family has it that the Rev. William Skinner was the last chief of the wicked and traitorous "Clan McGregor" (as acts of the British



Parliament continued to term it as long as the Georges sat on the throne) and came to this country with a price on his head, after the collapse of the Pretender's cause in 1716. He took orders and was appointed by the venerable "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," its missionary at Perth Amboy, and neighborhood; and was zealous, as such, from 1721, to his death in 1757. The fruits of his labours are now being gathered in many of the prosperous parishes of Middlesex and Monmouth Counties.

His daughter Gertrude was a woman remarkable for her vigorous piety and other excellencies of character. Of her, Mr. Whitehead remarks:—"If the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, a praying mother is, in all ages, the well-spring of spiritual life in the family." The sturdy adherence of her descendants to the Church is clearly traceable, through her, to her father.

Before the Revolution, Mr. Parker was a strong Church of England man; was vestryman and warden of St. Peter's.

One of the most enduring and useful things he did, was to procure, in company with a large number of the most eminent and influential Churchmen of the three Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the incorporation in 1769, of the "Corporation for the Relief of the Widows and Children of Clergymen of the Church of England, by Law established, in America." This benevolent Institution has endured to this day, dispensing its relief to many thousands of beneficiaries, and it was through its meeting, held in Christ Church, New Brunswick, on May 11, 1784 (at which Mr. Parker

was one of two laymen present) that steps were taken to bring the Churches in the different Provinces (then just become the States) into union with each other, so as to form that branch of the "Catholic Church," known in law as the "Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." He was a Deputy to the General Convention of 1785. A Committee appointed to revise the "Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England" in order to adapt it to the changed political condition of the country, proposed very radical changes, which were embodied in what was known as "The Proposed Book of Common Prayer."

In May, 1786, a Diocesan Convention was held in St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, in which two days' debate and struggle took place over the approval of the "Proposed Book" in which Mr. Parker, Hon. John De Hart, Matthias Halstead, Henry Waddell, Hon. David Brearley (whom Washington appointed United States District Judge), and Abraham Ogden (progenitor of the New York Churchman of that name) were opposed to such approval: and Hon. John Stevens (the ancestor of the Hoboken family); Rev'd Uzal Ogden, (who, strangely enough, after having been elected the first Bishop of New Jersey, and being objected to, was not confirmed by the General Convention, although the Diocese stood strongly by him, requited the confidence of the latter by endeavoring to set up old Trinity Parish, Newark, as a "Church of England in America," with himself as its minister to pray for the King and Royal family), and John Dennis, were in favor of the book. The result was the adoption of a Memorial to the General Convention against it, which Mr. Parker wrote and pre-

sented, which at once caused the rejection of the Proposed Book, and a return to better liturgical principles. He was a Deputy to the General Convention of 1789, at which the Union of the Churches with Bishops Seabury, White and Provost, at its duly consecrated Bishops, was effected and the adoption of the "Book of Common Prayer" that has stood, with slight changes, until the present.

Thereafter Mr. Parker lived quietly in his home, at Perth Amboy, universally respected; his death was greatly lamented.

A plain marble slab in St. Peter's Churchyard is inscribed:—

"In memory of James Parker, who died 4th of October, 1797, aged 72 years; and of Gertrude, wife of James Parker, who died 10th of February, 1711, age 71 years."

"The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

Mr. Parker was a conspicuous specimen of what were called, in the days before the Revolution swept away all distinctions, "The Gentry," of whom a recent writer in the "Story of an Old Farm," says:—"Both in town and country, they were as distinct from the people at large, as were the upper classes in England. Extensive land owners, persons with important connections abroad, members of the King's Council, and of the House of Burgesses, or Assembly, and those near the government, were held in high consideration, and ranked as the great men of their countries. Their personal dignity was sustained by their dress, manners, modes of life and the civil and military offices distributed among



them. Perth Amboy, the Capitol, at that time, of the Province, was eminently aristocratic. That we may learn something of its society, let us summon a member of his Majesty's Council from his bed of mould in St. Peter's Churchyard. Here he comes, making his state-ly way along the principal streets. He cuts a strange figure in this work-a-day world of ours, with his broad skirted scarlet coat, white silk waistcoat embroidered with flowers, black satin knee-breeches, and paste knee and shoe buckles. As he tickles his nose with snuff from a gold box, his bewigged head shakes despondingly under its odd, three-cornered covering. He looks disappointed, he is disappointed. When this King's Councillor stepped from his grave into this busy nineteenth century, with its wonderful achievements in science and progress, he expected to find Perth Amboy a great city. To him and his fellows of the olden time it seemed designed by nature for an important commercial metropolis. He had believed that, with its nearness to the sea, its unrivalled harbor, it was destined to outstrip New York; and, perhaps, become the great city of the continent. Alas, he finds it a city but in name; and is disgusted to find its ancient glory all gone. The Councillor seems strangely out of place among the ugly modern shops of this busy street; let us seat him in a high-backed chair in a broad hallway of one of the old houses of his time. Now he appears in a more appropriate setting. You need not offer him a glass of whiskey—he is not acquainted with the beverage. “Rum punch?” Yes: he will take that—it was a favorite drink of his day. Now that he has washed the dust of nearly a century and a half from his ancient throat,

let us hear what he has to say. Evidently, in his pristine glory, he was a gallant man, for his first topic is the ladies; how they appeared like "birds of paradise" he says—"with stuffed satin petticoats, taffetas, brocades, tall hats, lofty coiffures, long feathers, powder and patches; their gowns buoyed out one or two feet on either side of the hips, but not in front or behind; so that—he tells with a chuckle—a lady of fashion, in full dress, in order to gain admission to her own door, was forced to present her flanks first, and thus sidle in like a crab. A graphic description of the appearance of the gentlemen and ladies as they assembled on the bluff and Sunday mornings, to worship at St. Peter's; the dignified walk of the men, with crimson and gilt garments, silk stockings, cocked hats and long gold-headed canes; and the young lads, in dress brilliant, but ludicrous reproduction of their elders. The grand dames, with high heels and stiff stays, come ballooning along, their voluminous skirts swaying and fluttering in the fresh sea breeze. With what ceremony did they greet each other. As the men raised high in the air their gold-laced hats, and bowed low their curled heads, the ladies, stopping short in their promenade, placed one foot twelve inches behind the other, and dropped a formal, stately and profound courtesy. It is agreeable to listen to his tales of the ostentation and parade. How the Mayor, while acting officially, had a mace bearer, who carried before him that ancient insignia of corporation authority; of the flourish and ceremony on Court days; of the Judges on circuit being met outside of the town by the Sheriff, Justices of the Peace, and other gentlemen on horseback, who escorted them in honour to

their lodgings; and how, in going to and from the Court House, the Judges were attended and preceded by the Sheriff and Constables, carrying their staves of office; while all evil doers trembled in the presence of the august procession." This and much more could he tell; but we must put an end to his garulity and remand him to his narrow bed.

I don't know that the author had my ancestor in mind, in the Councillor he has thus pictured; but he is amazingly like what I fancy he was; for Mr. Whitehead, who married his grand-daughter, describes him as "of tall stature and large frame, with a mind of more than ordinary strength and vigor."

James Parker (1) left several children, of whom James Parker (3), became a lawyer, married Ann, daughter of John Lawrence of Burlington. Her brother was Captain James Lawrence, of the "Chesapeake" frigate, whose tragic death, and ringing words, "Don't give up the Ship," must have been an inspiration to all young Naval officers unto this day. They had no son. One of their daughters, Maria, married the late Edward W. Dunham, the founder and first President of the Corn Exchange Bank of New York; the other died unmarried. John Parker and his wife lie side by side in the Churchyard of Christ Church, New Brunswick.

Hon. James Parker (2), was born March 1, 1776 at the farm (Shirley) before referred to, to which his father had taken his family for safety from the troubles of the time. He graduated from Columbia College, New York, in 1793, at the age of 17, was educated for a merchant; but the death of his father in 1797 threw upon him the care of a very large landed estate, much of



which was held under merely verbal trusts, and he was compelled to relinquish his mercantile aspirations. He soon became prominent in public life; was a member of the Assembly of New Jersey from 1806 to 1819, with the exception of one year; and, again, for a special purpose, became such in 1827. In those days the office sought the man; and no political boss dictated the nomination.

Of Mr. Parker's general legislative career, the late Judge Richard S. Field (United States Circuit Judge for New Jersey) said:—"With the single exception of the year 1812, he was in a political minority in the Assembly; but such was his well-known integrity, his straightforward honesty, his peculiar capacity for business, and his manly independence, that he always exerted a commanding influence in that body. Its records teem with manifestations of his untiring industry, of his great ability, and his unswerving fidelity to the best interests of the people of the State. On almost every page are found exhibitions of his active mind, of his public spirit, of his large and liberal views. One whose attention has not been called to the subject will be surprised to find with how many wise and useful laws he enriched our Statute books."

He was very prominent in advocacy of the abolition of slavery in the State; and of the vigilant enforcement of the law for that purpose in after years. He was the author of the State Common-School system. The Delaware and Raritan Canal was his project; and it was for this that he entered the legislature in 1827. As chairman of the Special Committee in reference to it, he said:—"The general welfare of the United States requires a communication by water through the State of

New Jersey, as one link in the great chain of internal navigation which is to connect all the Atlantic States and part of the Western States with each other. This great line of communication is necessary for the purpose of the trade and intercourse at all times; and most essential to our protection and defense in time of war."

These are words of prescience, which have not lost their force through lapse of time. The pending enlargement of the Erie Canal is, in a sense, a fulfillment of his far-seeing views; and our National legislators would do well to act upon them, instead of squandering the public money in deepening such important streams as "Cheesequakes Creek," and the headwaters of the rivulets that flow into the Yellowstone, or Arkansas Rivers.

He was one of the Commissioners who framed the treaty which settled the boundary questions between New York and New Jersey; was Democratic Presidential Elector, and voted, though unavailingly, for his friend Gen. Jackson in 1824; Democratic Collector of Perth Amboy, by appointment of President Jackson—1829-1833; Democratic member of Congress (1833-1837), and supported President Jackson in his fight against the re-charter of the Bank of the United States, and voted against it. While in Congress the contest over the right of petition raged, when petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia began to pour in. The members of the slave States endeavored to prevent their reception; but he, in company with Ex-President John Quincy Adams, insisted that the people had the right to send a respectful petition to the Congress on any subject; whether the prayer of the petitioners should be granted or not, being another matter. It re-



quired great courage to stand for so plain a principle, even at that early day, when slavery was the subject.

Throughout his Congressional career he was known as a man whose convictions of right would be followed without regard to consequences to himself; and that fiery Hotspur of Virginia, who, as Governor of that State, took great credit in hanging poor old crazy John Brown, and gave the closing years of life in the cause of secession, Henry A. Wise, always spoke of him as "honest James Parker."

In 1839, Mr. Parker became a Whig, largely because of the establishment of the "Sub-Treasury." That institution has been so long a part of our financial system, that it seems almost incredible that it ever had any opposition; but it was fought over as virulently as any question that has ever disturbed our peace.

He was an active and influential member of the Constitutional Convention of New Jersey of 1844, and Chairman of the Committee on the Bill of Rights, and wrote most of it. He was, for a long time, Trustee of Rutgers College; and gave the land in New Brunswick on which most of its buildings stand. He was also Trustee of the College of New Jersey (Princeton) 1825-9; Vice-President and President of the New Jersey Historical Society; was several times Mayor of the City of Perth Amboy; Warden and Vestryman of St. Peter's Church, and represented it in Diocesan Conventions for forty years or more; and was, several times, Deputy to the General Conventions of the Church.

His first wife, and the mother of his children, was Penelope, daughter of Anthony Butler of Philadelphia, who was married to him by the venerable Bishop White

in 1803. Her mother was of the old Coates family of Philadelphia, and one of the most beautiful women of her day.

Their eldest son, James, my father, was an eminent lawyer and Judge in his adopted State, Ohio, where he died in 1861; his second son William, was an eminent civil engineer, who was Superintendent of the Boston and Worcester Railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, President of the Boston and Lowell Railroad; and finally, Superintendent of the Panama Railroad; his youngest son is the Hon. Cortlandt Parker, of Newark, N. J., who has long been recognized as a leader of the bar of this State.

Mr. Parker's second wife, by whom he had no children, was a daughter of Samuel Ogden of Morristown, N. J., and a niece of David B. Ogden, one of the most eminent lawyers of New York City.

Mr. Parker died April 1st, 1868, aged 92 years, 1 month; and is buried at the foot of his parents, in the old cemetery of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy. Judge Field has further said of him:—"What an eventful period his long life embraced. The American Revolution, with its varying fortunes, and glorious results, so pregnant with the welfare of mankind; the acknowledgement of our Independence as a nation; the adoption of our Federal Constitution; the French Revolution; the Consulate and Empire of Napoleon; the battles of Copenhagen, the Nile, Trafalgar, Waterloo; the Restoration of the Bourbons and their final expulsion; the vast political, social and geographical changes in Europe; the War of 1812-15; the opening of China and Japan to the World; the marvelous growth and expansion of our own coun-

try; the Mexican War; the addition of Florida; Louisiana, Texas and California to our domain; the War for the maintenance of the Union, and the destruction of Slavery; the wonders of modern science and engineering, the railroad, the steamboat, the ocean screw-steamship, telegraph—were ever so many wonderful things and stirring events crowded into the life of any one man? It was his good fortune to live in such a period of the World's history; and, with vigorous intellect, unbroken health, and unblemished honor, to engage in all the active duties of his time, for a period of more than four score years."

In another place, I, his eldest grand-son, have said of him:—"His life was begun with that of the Nation, when it was a mere fringe of the continent, washed by the waters of the Atlantic; it calmly closed when Peace had again smiled upon a land stretching from ocean to ocean, and from the Arctic nearly to the Tropics, and after the throes of our great Civil War had given freedom to four million of slaves; and he was a witness to all the marvelous developments that crowded that long period with events of such great importance to mankind. Well may his only son who survived him have caused his monument in the old Churchyard to be inscribed:

"His long life was noted for private worth and public usefulness. Civis, Senator, Maritus, Parens, Amicus, Cunctis vitae officiis, Aequibilis; Opum contemptor, recti pervicax, Constans adversus metus."

One of the daughters of James (1), Catharine Montgomery, married James Hude Kearny and left two daughters.



The youngest son of James (1) was Cortlandt Lewis, who was bred a merchant. He married Elizabeth Gouveneur, and died in Curacao, where he was United States Consul. One of his twenty-two children (all by her) was John Parker, for many years Cashier of the Phoenix Bank, New York City.

With him closes my sketch of the Parkers of New Jersey.



## ST. PETER'S CHURCH, PERTH AMBOY

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So many references to St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, have been made in the foregoing, that, considering the part that those who, since its establishment, have worshiped there, have played in the history of the State, a short sketch of it will not be out of place.

The City was laid out in 1682, though there had been settlers long prior to that year; and the Board of Proprietors at once built some houses. One of these was, in 1685, set apart as a place for "the peculiar service and worship of God," according to the "laws of England." In this building the services of the Church of England were held by missionaries sent out by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," until it was abandoned, and a new Church built on its present site, in 1820-1. In the back wall of the Chancel, a brick, with the date 1685 burnt into it, was set; and tradition has always had it that this brick was the corner-stone (if a brick may be so called) of the first building referred to. The Church built in 1720-1 continued as the only Church until 1851, when it, in turn, was torn down, and replaced by the present Church. Up to 1790, Perth Amboy continued to be the seat of Government of the State; and up to that time, St. Peter's congregation and worshippers, numbered the most important men of the State.

It is beautifully located, overlooking the Bay; with ample Churchyard, that has been used as such for a hundred and eighty years, surrounding it. The "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," might well have been written there,



## THE KEARNY FAMILY

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Of them I have not been able to gather as much as I desired. The living members of the family, who could have helped me, declined to do so; and I have been compelled to grope through libraries and historical publications, alone. It is not my fault, therefore, if the sketch of them is imperfect.

It is hardly necessary to premise that they are of Irish lineage; the name betrays that; and they have been prominent in the "Green Isle," since the days of Henry VII. The first of them in this country that we know of was Michael (1), who settled in Monmouth County, at Tinton (the Morris Manor) in the latter part of the 17th or first of the 18th century. He and his wife (who was Elizabeth Brittain) were born in Ireland. She bore him one son, Michael (2), who was at one time in the Royal Navy; but left it and left no record of his life that I have been able to find; and, after her death he married Sarah, a daughter of Lewis Morris, afterwards Governor of the Province, who was one of the ablest, wealthiest and most influential men of his time. After his second marriage, he came, in the year 1716, to Perth Amboy, and bought a lot on the bluff overlooking the bay, whereon he built himself a home; and resided there until his death. In 1732 he dug a well, which is useful unto this day; but the house has



long since vanished, though a part of its brick foundation remains to be seen.

He was, undoubtedly a man of education and culture. I have seen signatures of his which indicate that he was a skillful penman (an unusual accomplishment of that day). That he at once assumed a prominent social position, is shown by his second marriage into the Morris family, then of the most aristocratic in the Province. Her mother was Isabella, daughter of James Graham, the Attorney General of the Province of New York. Up to the 1st of September, 1737, he spelled his name "Kearney," as numerous deeds to and from him which I have examined, attest; but in a deed dated September 2nd, 1737, he and his wife signed it "Kearny," and thus it has ever since continued.

He held several important public offices; was Surrogate of Middlesex County, Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, Clerk of the Provincial Assembly of East Jersey, Treasurer of the Province from 1724 to 1734. When he died, I have not been able to learn, but he was living in 1783. Their only child was Philip (1) who became an eminent lawyer. When he was called to the bar, does not appear; but I find mention of him as a practitioner before the Council, as early as 1731; he was made Sergeant in 1755. He lived in Perth Amboy.

A Contemporary of David Ogden, Richard Stockton, Cortlandt Skinner and John De Hart, he was acknowledged equal of either of those eminent men. He was a long time in the Assembly, and held many positions of public trust; and died July 25th, 1775, "universally lamented."

His first wife was Lady Barney Dexter of Philadelphia, whose maiden name was Ravaud. She employed him to look after her property; and the result was their marriage. They had two sons and two daughters, Philip (2), Elizabeth, Susannah and Ravaud.

Philip moved to Newark, and died there. Amongst his descendants was General Stephen Watts Kearny, United States Army, the conqueror of California; and his great-grandson was General Philip Kearny ("Daredevil Phil") born June 2nd, 1815, in New York City, one of the most remarkable fighters this country ever produced. He was a hero in Mexico, where he lost an arm; in Algeria as a volunteer with the French against Austria in Italy; and, finally in the late Civil War, wherein he exhibited great qualities as a Corps commander.

What he might have done as the General of an Army, is problematical. He believed in, and acted on, the maxim "*L'audace, toujours l'audace*," and lost his life at Chantilly, in obedience to it. It may be doubted whether the rule is a proper one to be followed by the Commander of an Army. His life was a most remarkable one; and his death a great loss to the country. It is probable, that, had he not been killed at that time, he would have been the next commander of the Army of the Potomac, after General Pope's disastrous campaign. General Kearny could hardly be called a Jerseyman, though he had a country home on the Passaic River, just above Newark.

Elizabeth married Cortlandt Skinner, the Attorney General of the Province of New Jersey. Susannah married Richard Stevens, and died childless. She and

her husband are buried in St. Peter's Churchyard. Ravaud became a lawyer, inherited the law library of his father, and married Ann Hude, a great grand-daughter of Adam Hude who had come from Scotland in 1685, in the Ship "Henry and Francis." Their children were Philip (3), who died young; James Hude, who married Catharine Montgomery Parker, a daughter of James Parker (1) of Perth Amboy, and left two daughters; Ann Hude, who married Rev. Dr. Alexander Jones, then Rector of St. Peter's Church, and Gertrude Parker, who married Dr. Charles McKnight Smith. These two old ladies are yet living, both more than 85 years of age, and in fairly good health. Susan Ravaud, who married Rev. Dr. John R. B. Rogers of New York, and left several children, among them the late Rev. Dr. Ravaud Kearny Rogers, a prominent Presbyterian minister who officiated for many years at Bound Brook, New Jersey.

Ann Hude, who married John G. Warren of New York, and left many descendants, who are prominent in New York and New Jersey; her daughter married Nathan Rice of New Brunswick, and left two sons, one of whom is Judge J. Kearny Rice, now the United States Attorney from New Jersey.

Mary, who married Cornelius Low Hardenberg of New Brunswick, and left five children, amongst whom were Cornelius Low Hardenberg (still living) a prominent business man and banker of that City, Warren Hardenberg, long time a lawyer in New Brunswick, (lately deceased), and Augustus A. Hardenberg, formerly a member of Congress from New Jersey, who died several years since.

John, was the father of the late J. Kearny Warren,



a prominent Wall Street and society man in New York, and T. Robinson Warren, Esq., of New Brunswick, prominent in the business and literary worlds of the two States.

After the death of his first wife, Philip Kearny (1), married Isabella, daughter of Robert Lettice Hooper, who was Chief Justice of the Province, 1725-1738. By her he had seven sons, amongst them, Michael (3), who married a sister of Captain James Lawrence, of the frigate "Chesapeake." They resided in what is known as the "Kearny Cottage at Perth Amboy." They also had seven sons, only one of whom achieved any celebrity, or left any descendant.

That one was the late Commodore Lawrence Kearny, United States Navy, who was born in 1789, entered the Navy in youth, and became a very gallant and distinguished officer. In his Naval History, Cooper describes two of his deeds in the War of 1812-15—and well adds, "Handsomest exploits of the sort were not performed in the war."

Mr. Kearny continued according to this beginning, and while in command of the United States Sloop-of-War "Warren," after the war between the Turks and Greeks, when the Aegean sea swarmed with pirates, he did more to suppress them than all the commanders of the other vessels of war, American, English, French and Russian, put together.

The old hero died in 1868, aged 79 years, and lies buried with his people, in the old Churchyard in Perth Amboy. He left one son, who lives in the "Cottage."

This is all I have been able to glean of the Kearnys of New Jersey.

In the foregoing pages reference has been made to the old home of the Parkers, at Perth Amboy, which was named, "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary," THE CASTLE.

I may be pardoned a few words of retrospect concerning it. The stone part of it was built by John Parker (1) in 1720-21; the frame, and now, the front part of it, was built by his son James (1) in 1794. It has always been owned and inhabited by some member of the family.

If those old walls could speak, what a story they could tell. It has sheltered eight generations of the family; the loveliest and best of the people of New Jersey, the most illustrious and important men of the three Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, have been therein entertained as guests.

Governor William Burnet (1721-28), son of the famous Bishop of Salisbury, and the namesake and God-son of William of Orange, and a pupil of Sir Isaac Newton; Governor Montgomerie, who granted the Charter of New York City; Cosby; John Hamilton. (I have his old Dutch clock) (1742); Lewis Morris; Jonathan Belcher; Francis Bernard; Thomas Boone; Josiah Hardy; and Sir William Franklin, the last of Colonial Governors, who filled the chair of State from 1763 to 1776, when he was arrested, and sent over to his old friend, Gov. Trumbull of Connecticut, to be held a prisoner until exchanged; his father, Benjamin Franklin, the sage, philosopher and statesman; Francis Hopkinson and Richard Stockton, which three became Signers of the immortal Declaration.

To all these Governors the Parkers were Councillors;

with these, and, no doubt, hosts of others of the three Provinces, were drunk toasts to "Church and King," during more than fifty years prior to the Revolution.

But from out its back windows, one can look over across the waters of the Arthur Kill Sound, to the old "Billog House," on Staten Island, in which Lord Howe, in 1776, met the Commissioners from the Congress, Franklin, Rutledge and Adams, of the United Colonies, in a last endeavor to bring about an agreement that might avert a separation. The effort to settle the matter by negotiation was in vain; as was the later effort made in December, 1864, when President Lincoln met the Confederate Commissioners at Hampton Roads. Such issues, once raised, can only be settled by success in war.

We are too prone, in these practical, and unsentimental times, to destroy these historic places. The son, or the grand-son, remorselessly tears down the home of his fathers.

A feeling of sadness comes over me, whenever I witness such a desecration, which is well expressed in some lines by Thomas Frost, that I came upon some years ago. They are not particularly, as a whole, applicable to the "Castle," though much of the poem is; but a tender sentiment pervades them, which I hope, may be appreciated and enjoyed.



THE OLD MANSION

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I am old, I am quaint, I belong to the day  
Of knee-breeches, bob-wigs, and snuff;  
On my lintels lies thickly the dust of decay,  
And my doors show the weather's rebuff.  
Through my crumbling casements the wheezy wind  
    creaks;  
For my tenants I've spider, and worm;  
Pleasant fellows, who mind not the roof's many leaks,  
Or the staircases now so infirm.

Ah, what changes have been since my walls did repeat  
The first songs of contentment and mirth;  
When a noble young bridegroom, with gladness  
    replete,  
To his home brought the fairest of earth.  
Every spring-clad hill wore a smile on its face,  
And the garden, with hyacinths bright;  
And the gurgling brook, that hath left not a trace,  
Never sang such a song of delight.

Oft my banquet hall rang in those days without care,  
To the pledge of the "King and the Crown;"  
But, at last, came the time when the bonny young heir  
Dashed his goblet indignantly down,  
Crying:—"Give me a pledge that a freeman may  
    drink—  
Give a toast that will sour not the wine—  
For the cup that is raised to the King, shall not clink  
With this Liberty-chalice of mine."

Then a dozen swords leapt from their scabbards in  
haste;

And the father, grown harsh with his years,  
Bid the boy from the family hearthstone disgraced;  
While his sweet mother choked with her tears;  
And, as plaudits from each Royal-partisan flew,  
Cried the youth: "At last we'll unite  
Where an arrack-punch redder than this we will brew.  
And our toast shall be—"GOD AND THE RIGHT."

How prophetic the words! "In the proving, how dire."  
At Long Island the noble boy fell,  
When it seemed that stern Howe had extinguished the  
fire

Fearless Henry had lighted so well;  
Still, my corridors seem to re-echo the cheer  
That the victor-guests gave to the night,  
And I see a sad pageant—an unadorned bier—  
And a mother fall dead at the sight.

But the years brought around days as bright as those  
past;

When the sword was laid gracefully by,  
And the Heaven-born Flag of autonomy cast  
To its sole Lord and Master, The Sky.  
Yet, midst strangers I cherished in memory warm,  
Old days, wrapped in Time's rueful shroud,  
E'en as one 'neath the sunshine, looks back at the  
storm,  
If his home nestles under the cloud.

Now, my end nears apace; I belong to the day  
Of knee-breeches, bob-wigs, and snuff;  
And the proud "Modern Villa," just over the way,  
Thinks my time has lengthened enough.  
Well, I'm willing to bow to improvement's behest;  
Let the crow-bar, or axe be my due;  
'Tis the fate of the Old, to become a jest  
On the frivolous lips of the New.

July 23, 1897.

The Castle,  
Perth Amboy.

JAMES PARKER.















